

### In the Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended) A blood-free plasma expander and blood substitute for use in a subject in need thereof, ~~comprising~~ consisting essentially of alpha-keratose dissolved in ~~a physiologically balanced~~ an electrolyte solution.

Claim 2 (currently amended) The blood free plasma expander and blood substitute according to Claim 1 wherein the ~~physiologically balanced~~ electrolyte solution is selected from the group consisting of sterile water, sterile saline, mixed salts solution, sterile dextrose and mixtures thereof.

Claim 3 (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition useful as a blood plasma expander and blood substitute ~~comprising~~ consisting essentially of a therapeutically effective amount of alpha-keratose dissolved in ~~a physiologically balanced~~ an electrolyte solution.

Claims 4-8 (cancelled)

Claims 9-20 (withdrawn)